



## Covid-19: medical students should not work outside their competency, says BMA

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Medical students who are employed in the NHS as part of efforts to swell staff numbers to tackle covid-19 should not be expected to “step up” and act outside of their competency, says the BMA in new guidance.<sup>1</sup>

This is the first set of guidance released by the BMA specifically for medical students, who have had placements and exams cancelled and are uncertain about how they might be employed in the NHS in the current crisis.<sup>2</sup> It says that any employment should be voluntary and within the competency of the student, who should have adequate access to personal protective equipment.

The guidance warns against students signing locally negotiated contracts for pre-foundation year 1 or “F0” roles, which have been offered in some areas to final year medical students who have passed their final exams.

The BMA refers to General Medical Council guidance that states that plans are not currently in place to move provisional registration forward from the normal August date.<sup>3</sup> It warns that there are concerns around the boundaries of practice and the level of supervision that students who take on roles in the NHS

would have, which could lead to unsafe working practices. The BMA is in talks to negotiate a safe national contract for such roles.

Chris Smith, co-chair of the BMA Medical Student’s Committee, said, “The committee as have been working on tackling matters surrounding covid-19 that affect medical students. We saw different roles and remits emerging across the country, and we want to make sure that everyone is getting the right information locally. The BMA is committed to supporting medical students as this situation evolves, ensuring that employers take on the correct responsibilities to safeguard medical students in appropriate roles within their competency levels.”

- 1 BMA. Covid-19: medical students requested to work in the NHS. <https://beta.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/covid-19/your-contract/covid-19-medical-students-requested-to-work-in-the-nhs>.
- 2 Mahase E. Covid-19: medical students to be employed by NHS as part of epidemic response. *BMJ* 2020;368:m1156. 10.1136/bmj.m1156 32198184
- 3 GMC. Information for medical students. [www.gmc-uk.org/news/news-archive/coronavirus-information-and-advice/information-for-medical-students](http://www.gmc-uk.org/news/news-archive/coronavirus-information-and-advice/information-for-medical-students).

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